Hamlet Lesson Plans and Ideas

Pre Reading

- Anticipation guide
- Shakespeare Scavengery Hunt
- Three Minute Persuassion
- Intro to Shakespeare and Elizabethan England Powerpoint

During Reading

- Sonnet maker
- Reading log
- Scenes from different films
- Memorize and recite a soliliquy or monologue
- MODEL Soliloquy: Replace “To Be” speech with another action: “to diet, to study, to work” etc. Model the piece all the way through.
- Group theme work: As you read, have groups assigned to look for certain imagery and themes:
  - Decay and corruption
  - Insanity
  - Truth and falsity
  - Female roles
- Ask students to list each separate subplot, trace the lines of each subplot, and describe how the subplot contributes to the play as a whole.

Post Reading

- Create a poster collage of items they find in print and online relating to Hamlet (or Shakespeare)
- Hamlet in the Bush article – read and reflect
- Film adaptations and reviews
- Students choose favorite scene and explain why (act out / create video)
**Writing activities**

[http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/hamlet/hamletmain.html](http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/hamlet/hamletmain.html) lesson plan on persuasive writing and Hamlet

What is the function of the soliloquies in *Hamlet*?

Discuss Shakespeare’s use of figures from nature in the play.

How does Shakespeare make use of classical allusions?

Is Hamlet’s madness feigned or real?

Is Hamlet a story of tragedy or revenge?

Discuss the difference between Hamlet and Laertes. Consider their reactions to their fathers’ deaths.

What was Hamlet’s tragic flaw?

Is Hamlet a man of action or inaction?

Discuss Hamlet’s treatment of and ideas about women. How might these help to clarify some of the interpretative issues of the play? You might want to consider carefully the way he talks about sexuality.

Discuss the importance in *Hamlet* of one of the following: (a) Ophelia, (b) Rozencrantz and Guildenstern, (c) the ghost of Hamlet senior, (d) Polonius, (e) Fortinbras, (f) Gertrude. Do not just write about what these people do. Discuss how an attention to them illuminates issues of central importance to the play as a whole (i.e., deal with matters of importance to the thematic or character development in the play, not with matters of the plot).

Is something rotten in the state of Denmark? If so, what precisely is it? Is anyone in particular responsible or is the rottenness simply a condition of life?

Select a particular scene in *Hamlet* (preferably a short one) and discuss its importance in the play. How does this particular part of the action contribute significantly to our response to what is going on? What might be missing if a director decided to cut this scene (e.g., Claudius at prayer, the scene between Polonius and Reynaldo, the gravedigger scene).

Think about Hamlet’s relationship with Ophelia. Does he love her? Does he stop loving her? Did he ever love her? What evidence in the play supports your opinion?